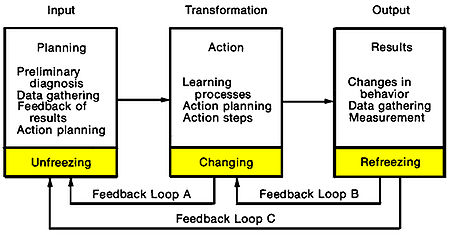
EDLD 5601 – What I Learned About Action Research

According to Dana, “administrator inquiry refers to the process of a principal (or educator) engaging in systematic, intentional study of his/her own administrative practice and taking action for change based on what he/she learns as a result of the inquiry” (Dana, 2009, p.2).  Inquiry leads to discovery in this process. With educator inquiry or action research, a teacher or administrator can work in collaborative groups to solve or improve a problem. I also liked the definition from Wikipedia describing action research as a “community of practice.” Their definition states that, “action research is a [reflective process](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reflective_process) of progressive [problem solving](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Problem_solving) led by individuals working with others in teams or as part of a "[community of practice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_of_practice)" to improve the way they address issues and solve problems. Action research is done simply by action, hence the name. Action research can also be undertaken by larger organizations or institutions, assisted or guided by professional researchers, with the aim of improving their strategies, practices, and knowledge of the environments within which they practice. As designers and stakeholders, researchers work with others to propose a new course of action to help their community improve its work practices” (Wikipedia, 2010). After looking at these descriptions of action research, I focused on some of the ways that the inquiry process could help on my own campus. It is a data driven collaborative analysis. Action research is normally done in teams or groups. They address an issue and work together to find solutions to their problems. Action research can also be called “practitioner inquiry” or “classroom research”. “This research would focus on the concerns of practitioners (not outside researchers) to discover areas for improvement” (Dana, 2009 p.5). It would engage practitioners in the design, data collection, and interpretation of data around their question. According to Dana, action research has many benefits. The first benefit is that theories and knowledge are generated from research grounded in the realities of educational practice. The second benefit is that practitioners become collaborators in educational research by investigating their own problems. The third benefit is that practitioners play a part in the research process, which makes them more likely to facilitate change based on the knowledge they generate. (Dana, 2009, p.5) Below is a great diagram developed by Kurt Lewin describing action research. As shown in this diagram, action research contains the following phases. First you have the action planning stage during where there is the collection and gathering of data. The next phase is the action phase where there is careful examination of the learning processes and steps are developed to design, collect the data and begin the interpretation the data. Finally, there is the last phase where the results are analyzed. This phase would result in reflection and action. It would be a continual process where educators would clarify and diagnose the situation, formulate action strategies for improving the situation or resolving a problem, implement the action strategy and evaluate their effectiveness, and finally clarify the situation. This would be an ongoing process with much feedback involved. John Dewey called for teachers to engage in “reflective action” that would transform them into inquiry-oriented classroom practitioners (Dana, 2009, p.6). Educators and administrators have to be equipped with the tools of inquiry, use these tools in the action research methods, and work collaborately to seek out change by reflecting on their own professional practice.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Systems_Model_of_Action-Research_Process.jpg)

After looking at these descriptions of action research, I focused on some of the ways that the inquiry process could help on my own campus. I think working collectively is the key focus to making action research a successful inquiry. The continuous data analysis, collection, and measurement is important for the success of the inquiry. This analysis with the collaborative group allows for continuous feedback, reflection and results in being able to make beneficial changes and improvements.

Fichman, Nancy Dana (2009). *Leading with Passion and Knowledge:  The Principal as Action Researcher.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Harris, S., Edmonson, S., and Combs, J. (2010)*. Examining What We Do to Improve Our Schools: 8 Steps to Improve our Schools.* Eye on Education Press.

A blog, being an online journal can be a great place for an educational leader to have an ongoing dialogue or discussion. This blog can be frequently updated and is a personal Web site that features diary type entries and links to many articles and other Web sites. A blog, since it is owned by that individual can be updated regularly and the timeline is very important. Educational blog posts are normally one educator’s opinion, followed by other educators’ comments. Educators that read books or articles, attend in-service conferences, workshops or trainings can have a blog space to share their experiences. At these events an educational leader might learn some new and innovative approaches. A blog provides a space for that educator to reflect upon these experiences. It allows an opportunity while writing in their blog to reflect upon what they might have learned at these events. They can share these experiences on their blog. They can learn from their reflections and it allows other educational leaders to share in those experiences. Sometimes an educator might want to showcase some of the activities that are happening on their campus or in their district. A blog could be a place to post a syllabus, classroom activities, or campus events. Blogging invites replies, comments, and discussions about some of the ideas posted on the blog. It allows for a connection and sharing with other colleagues and can provide an area where educators can learn from each other. As an educator, we can never stop learning and growing in our professional experiences. By sharing these experiences with others, we can facilitate change, reflect, and make improvements to benefit ourselves and other educators.